Dancers spend hours perfecting a single move. They wrap their tired, bloody toes before they slide their feet into ballet pink tights. Dancers move gracefully in pointe shoes and keep a calm face as their toes wither in pain as the hard boxes of the shoes press against their toes and cause blisters and bruised toenails. Anyone who says dancing is not a sport obviously has never felt the endurance, the rush, the pain, the joy, and the accomplishments of dancing. Like any other sport, dancers have a team, if one dancer in your class does not put in the same effort as another dancer, the team suffers by embarrassing themselves at a recital, or losing at a competition, the same way a soccer team losses their game if their goalie isn’t paying attention, or a football team only has one good player, but the rest of the team can’t defend him. Your team is your family, and so are your co dancers. You spend the day warming up with them, sweating with them, falling with them, laughing with them, sharing your passion with them. You dance with your team, you play soccer with your team. Dancers work as hard, if not harder than most sports players, by spending all day dancing vigorously in painful pointe shoes and often times don’t leave the studio until the darkness hours of the night, with their toes bruised and bleeding. Dance is a sport, regardless if it is recognized as one or not.   
  
 Dancers work out, have practices, stretch, have uniforms and routines just as any other sport does. As a tennis team prepares for a match by packing their rackets, stretching their arms, and hitting tennis balls across the court, dancers stretch their lean muscles farther than most minds can fathom, they put on their tights and leotard and wrap their hair neatly in a bun. They warm up doing pleas, grand jetes, and foutees en tournant in a mirrored room. They mentally prepare for the moment they’ve been waiting for, the moment they’ve been practicing for hours on end. They walk onto the stage as a basketball player would walk onto the court: with a racing heart and confidence. The basketball player see’s their challenge: beating the opponent, the dancer sees the talented ingénue, fresh faced and graceful, dancing her way to the top, trying to take the prima’s spot. A dancer must work to raise to the prima position, but they must work even harder to stay on top. True dancers are never fully satisfied in their work, because they always strive for better. Some say traditional athletes think that way as well. Athletes set goals, and when they achieve their goal, they strive for a higher goal, nothing to them in unreachable. Some skeptics believe dance is not a very completive sport, which is a bunch of “tutus and pink leotards waltzing around for fun”. Those skeptics are so wrong. In the Juilliard Dance School alone, they only accept 12 women and 12 men out of the thousands upon thousands that apply to attend the prestigious college. Not one person can argue and say that is not competitive.  
  
 The game starts as soon as the music starts. The athlete moves with the music and gives their all for the win. As the dance progresses, their energy lowers and the adrenaline is slowing. The dancer sees the trophy in their future and that pumps gallons of blood and energy, and new life, and excitement into their body again and the last minute of the game is the most exciting,the most energetic and the most rewarding. Knowing they have this once chance to prove themselves, that this is their judgment day, dancers give everything to the stage on the day of their performance. When the game is over, when the athlete knows their practices paid off, when they have that win, it is the happiest moment an athlete can have. A dancer is an athlete. They feel that happiness at the end of routine, they know what they have done to make that routine the best it can be, and that’s the greatest joy a dancer can experience. Dancers may be proud of that one moment, but as soon as their head is back in the game, they find themselves choreographing in their heads, setting higher standards, and wanting to dance harder than before, just as athletes do after a game. Dancers are absolutely, without a doubt an athlete. They practice, they compete, they win, they lose, they stretch, they endure, they love what they do. They dance the same way soccer players weave the ball between their feet. Dance is a sport.